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LINCOLN
IN NEW ENGLAND



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LINCOLN IN
NEW ENGLAND

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LINCOLN

IN NEW ENGLAND

By

PERCY COE EGGLESTON



ABRAHAM LINCOLN first set foot on New England soil in 1848. He had grown as do the oaks, by the inherent expansion of the right royal law of life. This erstwhile lad of the forest, scion of Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, rail-splitter, Mississippi boatman, frontier storekeeper, deputy surveyor, country lawyer, state assembly-man, had in fact grown to be one of the most distinguished citizens of Illinois and a representative of that state in the National House of Representatives. He had taken an active part in the work of the Thirtieth Congress and, when the near approach of the coming presidential election enlivened its closing days, he had taken the floor and spoken so well in favor of "Old Rough and Ready" that his speech was reported the country over by the Whig press.

This speech, and the respect inspired by his work in Congress, brought Lincoln an invitation to deliver a number of campaign speeches in Mass-

achusetts. In September, 1848, he spoke at Worcester, Lowell, Dedham, Roxbury, Chelsea, Cambridge, and on the twenty-second of the month in Tremont Temple, Boston. Successful and well received as were these speeches at the time, they were not long remembered and in five years Lincoln was forgotten and again practically unknown in New England. But for Lincoln, himself, something had been gained that was to be a force in his own development. This first contact had started his mind on an idea that was to become a mighty conviction during the twelve years that were to spend their course before his second visit to New England. What wonder that in this region he gave new importance to the free soil sentiment and gauged the widening breach between the northern belief that slavery was evil and unendurable, and the southern claim that it was divine and necessary. Such men as Sumner, Garrison, Whittier, Lowell, Emerson, Palfrey, Hoar, and Adams were already in the field, and Massachusetts was quivering under their impassioned protests. Sensitive and trained to every shade of popular feeling, Lincoln was quick to mark the trend of this gathering tide and he returned to Illinois, believing that slavery was the main question—the irrepressible question that must eventually be met and settled.

And now that a better insight may be had into the events of the short two weeks in which we are mainly interested, let us pass briefly in review the progress of affairs during the twelve years intervening between Lincoln's first and second visit to New England.

Lincoln returned home feeling his deficiencies, and at once started a course of study to raise himself in general culture to the standing of the men whom he had met in the East. He resumed the practice of law, and for the following six years regularly went the rounds of his Judicial Circuit. He not only had countless cases of minor importance but, in the number of more important cases conducted before the Supreme Court of his state, he distanced all his contemporaries. He was losing more and more his old inclination for politics when, in May, 1854, he was aroused by the passage of the "Kansas-Nebraska Act" which annulled the Missouri Compromise and forbade its application to Kansas, Nebraska or any other territory. Seventeen years earlier, Lincoln had declared that slavery was "founded on both injustice and bad policy." While he believed that it could not be interfered with in the states where it was recognized by the constitution, he approved and held sacred the ancient compacts that had been made to close the doors against slavery in all new territory. The bill had been proposed by Stephen A. Douglas, and its passage brought Lincoln from the court room to the stump. His speeches on this question in reply to Senator Douglas formed the first series of Lincoln-Douglas debates and proved conclusively that Lincoln was to lead the fight in Illinois against the extension of slavery. All other issues became as pebbles to Gibraltar before this greater one—slavery or no slavery in the territories. It was the rock on which the Whig party foundered: the southern wing had

voted for the repeal and the northern wing against it, so the party was practically no more. Some of its members were drawn into the Know-Nothing Lodges, some joined the Abolitionists, and others drifted about without compass until they came together in a new organization which they called Republican. Lincoln lost no time in taking ground with the new party. He assisted at its birth and soon became its acknowledged leader in the state. The first National Convention of the party, in 1856, surprised him with 110 votes for Vice-President against 180 votes for the successful candidate. Two years later the Republican State Convention unanimously resolved "that Hon. Abraham Lincoln is our first and only choice for United States senator to fill the vacancy about to be created by the expiration of Mr. Douglas's term of office." In publicly accepting the nomination, Lincoln uttered the memorable words, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided." With these prophetic words, uttered against the advice of his conservative friends, Lincoln opened the campaign against Douglas. The famous Lincoln-Douglas debates followed, in which Lincoln won a series of victories that astonished the country. His success did not win him the senatorship, but it awakened an interest in him that spread with the wider reading and discussion of his arguments. He was besieged by letters of congratulation; invitations to

lecture and to speak poured in upon him. Most of these invitations he declined, but among those accepted was the one that brought him to New York in the early winter of 1860.

Here, on February 27th, Lincoln delivered his famous Cooper Union speech, which stands out superb as a political masterpiece and is worthy an enduring place in our country's literature. It also marks the exact point of time and circumstance in Lincoln's career, following immediately upon which he entered New England for the second time.

Sometimes a distinction is drawn between occasion and cause. If this distinction is to be applied to Lincoln's second visit to New England, then the occasion for it may be explained by his own presence in New York, and the opportunity that it afforded him to visit his eldest son Robert, who was then a student at Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. But the cause that drew Lincoln not only to New Hampshire, but to other points in New England, must be assigned to other grounds. Lincoln was known in the East mainly as one of the best political speakers of his party. He was regarded as an active party worker from the West, but in no sense as probable presidential timber. But out in Illinois, the notion had been growing, since the Lincoln-Douglas debates, that Lincoln was a really great man, and his friends had quietly reached the decision that, when the Republican National Convention met in Chicago in May, Illinois would present his name as her one and only choice for President. Lincoln knew of this determination on the part of his friends, and also

knew that things had already gone so far that it was now practically sure that his name would be presented. Concerning this situation, about which the East was ignorant, he was fully informed at the time of his Cooper Union speech. As soon as Lincoln reached New York, he was importuned to enter New England and lend the force of his logic to help in carrying the state elections which were then pending. Hon. N. D. Sperry, of New Haven, then chairman of the Republican State Central Committee of Connecticut, sent a representative to New York and was successful in arranging for Lincoln to visit Connecticut, which state was doubtful and likely in its gubernatorial contest to go either way. Similarly Lincoln was approached by party leaders from New Hampshire and Rhode Island. The situation as he saw it was that his name was sure to be presented to the Republican National Convention to be held in two months; he was little known in New England, and those who had this little knowledge had drawn it from the conflicting reports of a rankly partisan press; here was an opportunity to labor for the good of the general cause, and at the same time to make himself known, to create confidence in his sincerity and possibly gain some support in this influential section. All this might be done by the power of personal contact and without prematurely disclosing the project upon which his western friends were already hard at work. These considerations had their weight and are really the cause, while the opportunity to visit his son is merely the occasion, for his second visit to this section.

It is a surprising fact that, notwithstanding all that has been written about Mr. Lincoln, his biographers have treated his New England trip with scant brevity and a great deal of inaccuracy. The work of Nicolay and Hay, which in other respects is the best and most complete authority on Lincoln's life, dismisses the trip with a single paragraph which does no more than briefly picture the general impression that Lincoln made upon the locality. No details are preserved, and practically nothing of date, route or incident is to be learned from this authority. Lamon's work places Mr. Lincoln's son, Robert, at Harvard at the time; and Coffin makes the same mistake. The fact is that Robert T. Lincoln did not enter Harvard until the September following, seven months after this visit. Lamon gives a correct list of the Connecticut speeches, but without dates. He makes no mention of the speeches at Providence, Rhode Island, and at Exeter and Dover, New Hampshire. Tarbell gives some of the Connecticut speeches with correct dates, but mentions none at Providence, Rhode Island, nor at Meriden and Bridgeport, Connecticut. Coffin makes the mistake of having Mr. Lincoln speak at New Haven and Meriden before visiting Hartford, and mentions no speeches at Providence and Woonsocket, Rhode Island, none at Exeter and Dover, New Hampshire, and none at Bridgeport, Connecticut. These inaccuracies and contradictions prevail not only among the writers mentioned but to an even greater extent among those less well known, and less often consulted. It comes about from this

condition of affairs, that the investigator, who wishes to follow the course and dates of this itinerary, cannot obtain his information from any single one of the standard works on Lincoln, and, when he attempts to select and combine information from several of them, he soon finds himself involved in a network of conflicting statements and dates that must eventually drive him for an accurate determination of the facts to the evidence furnished by the old newspaper files of the day.

A brief schedule condensed mainly from this reliable source will, therefore, disabuse our minds, at the outset, of all wrong impressions and inferences regarding the general direction and progress of this trip and also provide a framework for securing in their right succession some of its incidents, concerning which we propose later to deal in some detail. Starting with Tuesday, February 28th, the day following the Cooper Union speech, the itinerary that Mr. Lincoln adhered to was as follows:

Tuesday, February 28th, speech at Providence, R. I., evening.

Wednesday, February 29th, no speech, en route to New Hampshire.

Thursday, March 1st, speech at Concord, N. H., afternoon; speech at Manchester, N. H., evening.

Friday, March 2nd, speech at Dover, N. H., evening.

Saturday, March 3rd, speech at Exeter, N. H., evening.

Sunday, March 4th, spent day with son Robert at Exeter, N. H.

Monday, March 5th, speech at Hartford, Conn., evening.

Tuesday, March 6th, speech at New Haven, Conn., evening.

Wednesday, March 7th, speech at Meriden, Conn., evening.

Thursday, March 8th, speech at Woonsocket, R. I., evening.

Friday, March 9th, speech at Norwich, Conn., evening.

Saturday, March 10th, speech at Bridgeport, Conn., evening.

This schedule shows that Mr. Lincoln went direct from New York to Providence where he spoke on the evening of Tuesday, February 28th, in Railroad Hall. His Providence audience was large and enthusiastic, as his coming had been advertised and everyone was eager to hear the man whose speech had so impressed a New York audience on the night preceding. How fully their expectations were realized is shown by the fact that, before Mr. Lincoln left Providence, the party managers had arranged that, on his return from New Hampshire, he should speak at Woonsocket, situated some fifteen or twenty miles north of Providence and an accessible manufacturing center where it was believed that Lincoln would exercise a tremendous influence in offsetting "the silly gabble about John Brown and Helperism."

Still further proof of the enthusiasm created by Mr. Lincoln in Providence is to be found in the preparations made to take care of the large crowd that it was anticipated would wish to hear his later speech at Woonsocket, and these preparations are hinted at in the advertisements that appeared in the Providence papers on the days following:

"Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois will address the citizens of Woonsocket on the politics of the day, on Thursday evening next. The meeting will be held in the spacious and elegant hall belonging to Mr. Edward Harris. It will be a great gathering." * * * All

Providence people desiring to hear the speech "are particularly requested to call at the Republican Headquarters No. 11 Westminster Street, before the day of the meeting and leave their names."

The day following his speech in Providence was the only week day during his entire stay in New England on which Lincoln made no speech. This day, Wednesday, February 29th, was spent in reaching New Hampshire. Sometime during this day, or during the course of the next morning, he was joined by his son, Robert, who very likely remained with him and accompanied him to the several places where he spoke in New Hampshire.

Thursday, March 1st, was one of the busiest days of the trips. Lincoln spoke at Concord in the afternoon and at Manchester in the evening. These speeches were reported in the New Hampshire papers and can be referred to in many of the standard works on Lincoln. Judge David Cross of Manchester, while alive at the age of eighty-eight, gave his personal recollections of the meeting at Manchester in the following words:

"Mr. Lincoln spoke here on the evening of March 1, 1860. He had spoken at Concord in the afternoon of the same day, I think. He came from Exeter where he had been on a visit to his son, Robert, at the Exeter Academy, and Robert came to Manchester with him. The meeting was held in Smyth's Hall and Governor Frederick Smyth presided. There were more than a thousand people present, and every seat was taken, and many were standing. It is very difficult to give any adequate idea of the speech or of the effect upon the audience. The audience was composed of men and women, about half of them Democrats and the rest Republicans, with a few rabid Abolitionists. Mr. Lincoln had talked but a few minutes before he had the

eye and the closest attention of every person in the hall. He won the favorable attention of the audience by his clearness, tact and fairness upon facts, to which all agreed. He talked for about an hour and a half; no one left the hall, no one was restless, but everyone watched him closely and continually. At first, only a small part of the audience was in full sympathy with him, but, gradually, he won the interest and the admiration and the enthusiasm of all.

"The general tone of his address was similar to his speeches in Illinois in regard to slavery. I remember distinctly that Rev. Mr. Foss, a violent Abolitionist and an able and honest man, one of the Parker-Pillsbury-Garrison followers, occasionally interrupted him and asked him questions. After a while the audience cried, 'Throw him out.' Mr. Lincoln replied, 'No, no, let him stay, he is just the man I want to see and to answer. Now, my friend, what is your question? Let's talk together, I *want* you to jaw back.' Mr. Foss asked Mr. Lincoln several questions and Lincoln replied, and soon Mr. Foss was applauding with the rest of the audience, and after the meeting was over, Foss took Lincoln by the hand and thanked him and said, 'You are the only man that has ever talked to me in this way and I am not sure but you are right.'

"I remember Lincoln, somewhere in his talk with Foss, said to him, 'Now, my friend, you are in favor of dis-union. You think the only way is for the North and South to separate, but I tell you to stay with us and in the end the whole country will be free.' I remember a leading Democrat of Manchester, after the meeting, told me 'that was the best speech I ever heard in my life and I don't believe there is another man that can equal him.'

"The impression in my mind as he delivered that address is, that he seemed quaint and almost strange in manner and expression, but he seemed a man of intense earnestness and sincerity, gifted with all the arts of the best stump speaker, but also, like some old prophet, solemnly delivering his message of warning and exhortation to the people. I doubt if there was a per-

son in the audience who didn't applaud his speech, although many of them did not agree with him."

Manchester is the only place in New England that held a dreamer so bold as to publicly introduce Lincoln as the next President of the United States. Governor Smyth, to whom reference was made by Judge Cross in his recollections given above, met Lincoln at the cars and, after some introductory conversation, Lincoln remarked that he had just been reading William Seward's speech at Auburn. And upon Mr. Smyth's inquiring, "What do you think of it?" Mr. Lincoln replied, "I am delighted with it. That speech will make Mr. Seward the next president of the United States." Later Governor Smyth presided at the meeting in the hall and himself took the liberty of introducing Mr. Lincoln as the next president of the United States. Lincoln made no allusion to the introduction at the time. But later in conversation with Governor Smyth at the hotel, Lincoln remarked that the introduction at the meeting that evening had taken him by surprise as he had never before been so introduced. "But of course," said he, "you didn't mean anything?" Governor Smyth stated that he did believe what he had said, and that, if Lincoln had made the same impression in the other states where he had spoken as he had made that day on the people of New Hampshire, he would certainly receive the presidential nomination. Mr. Lincoln replied with earnestness, "No! no! that is impossible. Mr. Seward should and will receive the nomination. I do not believe that three states will vote for me in the convention."

In their effect upon his hearers, Lincoln's speeches at Dover on Friday, March 2nd, and at Exeter, on Saturday, March 3rd, were repetitions of his success at Concord and Manchester. Sunday, March 4th, was spent quietly with his son Robert, at Exeter. The old Phillips church where he attended divine service is now torn down but the pew, in which it is claimed Lincoln sat, was still extant several years ago and, at that time, carefully stored away in a cellar in Exeter.

Monday morning, March 5th, Mr. Lincoln left Exeter for Connecticut. New Hampshire had pressed him into the work beyond his expectations. His original plan had been to speak in Hartford on the evening of Friday, March 2nd, but the demand upon him for the speeches at Dover and Exeter had made it necessary to telegraph and set ahead his engagement at Hartford, which change of program must have been a very congenial one, as it made it possible for him to spend all of Sunday with his son at Exeter.

Lincoln's speech at City Hall, Hartford, on the evening of Monday, March 5th, had the same close attention and created the same degree of enthusiasm as his earlier speeches in New Hampshire. Such was Lincoln's reception everywhere in Connecticut. Large and enthusiastic crowds turned out to hear him and, in this respect, his success in one city was but a repetition of his success in another. So far as this aspect of his stay in Connecticut is concerned, this simple statement will suffice for all the stopping places and describe the conditions under which he spoke at each.

Two incidents connected with Lincoln's visit to Hartford are of noteworthy interest. Here began that personal acquaintance with Governor Buckingham which afterwards secured to the Governor so much influence in the nation's affairs, and gave his suggestions so much weight in shaping its policy. Buckingham entertained Lincoln while in Hartford and introduced him to his audience. So far as events could then be foreseen, Buckingham was more interested in the canvass than was Lincoln. He was again the Republican candidate for governor, and his re-election depended upon the result of the ballots to be cast the month following. Here also Lincoln first came in touch with the "Wide-Awake" movement, which became such a distinguishing feature of the campaign of 1860. The origin of the movement was purely accidental. A month earlier Cassius M. Clay had spoken in Hartford. A few ardent Republicans bearing torches had accompanied him as a kind of body-guard. Two of the young men, being dry-goods clerks, in order to protect their clothing from the dripping of the torches, had prepared capes of black cambric, which they wore in connection with the glazed caps commonly worn at the time. The marshal of the parade, noticing the uniform, put the wearers at the front where the utility and show of the rig attracted much attention. It was at once proposed to substitute oil-cloth for the cambric capes and adopt the uniform for a club of fifty torch bearers. In calling a meeting for that purpose, the "Hartford Courant" hit upon the term "Wide-Awakes" and it was appropriated

as the name of the organization. Before the new uniforms were all ready, Lincoln made his Hartford address. After his speech, such members of the organization as had secured their uniforms escorted Lincoln to his hotel. This company became known as the "Originals" in distinction from the other "Wide-Awake" organizations that at once sprang into life in other cities. During the following summer and fall, these bands, bearing blazing coal-oil torches, paraded the streets of almost every northern city and town, arousing everywhere the wildest fervor and enthusiasm and just one year after the "Originals" escorted Mr. Lincoln in their first parade, he was inaugurated President of the United States.

From Hartford, Lincoln went to New Haven. The largest hall in the city was located over Josslyn's livery stable, and there Lincoln spoke on the evening of Tuesday, March 6th. Former Congressman N. D. Sperry, now deceased, has stated that "his speech captivated all who heard it." The following incident is related by a number of Lincoln's biographers, and is claimed to have been referred to by Lincoln himself in a conversation that he had in Norwich, several days later, with Rev. John P. Gulliver. A Professor of Rhetoric in Yale College came to hear Lincoln. He was so impressed with what he heard that he took out his note-book and made notes of the address, and next day gave it to his class as a model; and not satisfied with one hearing, followed Lincoln to Meriden, where he again drank in the orator's marvelous eloquence. When one of the leading historians of Europe has de-

nominated Lincoln style as "masterly, cogent, splendidly strong and simple beyond description", there is nothing in this incident *per se* that places it beyond what would have been entirely possible and likely as an actual occurrence. It must be said, however, that the incident is one that has not readily proven itself as an actual fact. The Professor of Rhetoric at Yale was William A. Larned, who died in 1862. He instructed the Senior Class in recitations from "Demosthenes on the Crown" but those acquainted with the man say he was one not likely to have followed the course described; and further than this, no member of the class of 1860 has been found who can remember the incident. It seems more likely to have been a "hearsay" story that was going the rounds at the time, and Lincoln's facetious use of it indicates that he regarded it more as such than as an actual fact.

On Wednesday evening, March 7th, the extra train from New Haven took about three hundred, besides the orator, to Meriden. A torch-light procession escorted Lincoln to the great town hall, where he spoke to an audience that literally packed the building.

On Thursday, March 8th, the day following the speech in Meriden, Mr. Lincoln spent some three hours in New London, a fact that is little known among the present residents of that city. Even after what is to the historian a comparatively short lapse of time, most of the New Londoners, who took the opportunity to meet Mr. Lincoln, have passed away, and it is now too late to draw

upon their recollections. The late Mr. Julius W. Eggleston, father of the author, was at the time chairman of the Republican Town Committee of New London, and, in that capacity, he had the honor of entertaining Mr. Lincoln during his stay in the city. By supplementing what is still to be found in the old news files, with the statements of people until a few years ago still living, and with the things told in his own family and among his friends by the then chairman of the Republican Town Committee, some facts regarding the visit, are still preserved. And first of all, attention may be directed to an incorrect statement in the New Year's greeting in verse, that appeared in the New London Chronicle of January 1st, 1861, after the following manner:

"Here, too, we've had a famous year,
Tremendous things have happened here.
Bucks and Chepultepecs came out
In rival crowds with din and shout.
A mighty crowd one evening stood
To hear and cheer Fernando Wood.
Then Lincoln came, bold, stout and tall—
He made his speech in Lawrence Hall.
Then Douglas next, bold, stout and short,
He smiled, and praised our spacious port,
Looked round, and said, 'From such a home,
How could my honored grandsire roam!'"

Notwithstanding that this verse was composed less than ten months after Lincoln's visit, still the statement that he spoke in Lawrence Hall is undoubtedly incorrect. It may be explained on the ground of poetic license, or more likely it is due to the vagaries of the bard's memory. Certain it is that people would have heard the speech, or at least known of it, if it had been delivered, but

their testimony is that Mr. Lincoln made no public speech in New London. Further than this, it is also certain that, if such a speech had been delivered, some reference would have been made to it in the following item of local intelligence that appeared in the New London Daily Chronicle, of the next day, March 9th, 1860:

“Hon. Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, was in the city yesterday. He came on from New Haven on his way to Providence, and remained here some three hours.”

While the New Year's greeting for January 1st, 1861, is thus shown to be unquestionably incorrect in its reference to Lincoln's speech, still it affords a fairly correct idea of the city he visited:

“Our Mayor Harris keeps the peace,
Our merchants thrive though whales decrease.

* * * * *

Ten thousand people in our town,
Ten churches scattered up and down.
Twelve hundred houses too and more;
The public schools are twenty-four.
Five banks that discount more or less,
Four telegraphs and one express.
Two daily papers always joking,
Always sharp retort provoking.

* * * * *

The whalers, thirty-eight complete.

* * * * *

Fish markets by the waters bound,
Where fish may all the year be found—
Cod, mackerel, oyster—what you wish,
We challenge all the coast in fish.
Fire engines five, whose gallant bands,
Alert, with willing hearts and hands,
Are prompt with hose and steady aim,
To grapple with devouring flame.

What more? Why clubs and sewing bees,

Odd-fellows, Masons, Christmas trees;
Sweet carols that the children sing,
And lectures every week till spring."

Coming now to the real facts and details of Mr. Lincoln's visit to New London, the following are known to be correct. His decision to stop here was unexpected, and too short notice was given to allow any preparation for his reception. A telegram from the Hon. Nehemiah D. Sperry, of New Haven, reached the chairman of the New London Republican Town Committee in the morning, shortly preceding Mr. Lincoln's arrival. Mr. Eggleston went to the railway station but, through some inadvertence, there failed to intercept Mr. Lincoln. Thinking something might have prevented Mr. Lincoln from carrying out his purpose as telegraphed, Mr. Eggleston left the station and started back up the main street of the city. He had not proceeded far when his attention was attracted by the remarkable appearance of a figure, a short distance in advance. As viewed from the rear, the stranger appeared over six feet tall, his length of leg seeming out of proportion to his body. As he walked, he stooped slightly forward. He was a little pigeon-toed and this, with a peculiar method of setting his whole foot flat on the ground, made his gait a peculiar one. His ears were large, standing out from his head; hair was rather long and unkempt. He wore a suit of black broadcloth, somewhat wrinkled and apparently so much too small as to give the impression of a standing controversy between his trousers and his limbs. His hands were large and hung far below the confines

of his coat sleeves. In one of them, he carried by means of handles attached midway of its length, a long, cylindrical leather bag, a shape quite common at that date and rarely seen at the present time. The entire figure tallied with the descriptions in the press and could not be mistaken. Mr. Eggleston recognized it and knew that it could belong to one man only and that man was Lincoln. The visitor was taken to the old City Hotel, which hostelry has since been demolished. In his room, he was asked whether something could be ordered for him from the bar. He replied "No", and added either that he "never" or that he "scarcely ever took anything of that sort." And pausing here in our account, may we not remark the consistency between this statement and what occurred three months later in Lincoln's own home in Springfield, when the committee appointed by the National Republican Convention called to advise him of his nomination. "Gentlemen," said Lincoln, "you will be thirsty after your long journey" and, leading them into the library, he pointed them to a plain table, glasses and a pitcher of water. But returning now to our guest in the City Hotel. Mr. Lincoln had not yet dined. While he sat down to his meal, Mr. Eggleston started out to find and bring in the prominent Republicans of the city. He met with a poor response and a chilling lack of interest. Several of the party leaders exhibited no little impatience. "Who was Lincoln, anyway? A man indeed that the sparsely settled West might consider of some prominence but he would not go in the East. No, they hadn't

any time to meet him." Some few, however, were found who went to the hotel and met Lincoln—probably Mayor J. N. Harris, Hon. Henry P. Haven and a number of others. It would be interesting at this date to know the views that Lincoln there expressed and the terms in which he couched them. Certain it is that the conversation was mainly political, but the only remnant of what was said is one statement of Lincoln's showing his analysis of himself as a public speaker. "I am not much of a rouser as a public speaker," said Lincoln. "I do not and cannot put on frills and fancy touches. If there is anything that I can accomplish, it is that I can state the question and demonstrate the strength of our position by plain, logical argument."

Either the next day, March 9th, in going from Providence, Rhode Island, to Norwich, Connecticut, or one day later, March 10th, in passing from Norwich to Bridgeport, Mr. Lincoln was again in the railway station at New London for a few moments. There appeared a respected citizen of New London, familiarly known as "Uncle Peter", with his daughter Sarah's autograph album and solicited Lincoln for his autograph. In his good-humored and clumsy way, Lincoln took the album, and securing a pen, laid the book against the side walls of the waiting room and, with his long legs stretched in an ungainly angle, and feet braced far apart on the floor, taking infinite pains that the book should not slip, he inscribed in now familiar characters the name "A. Lincoln."

From New London, Mr. Lincoln took an after-

noon train for Providence, in order to keep the engagement that he had made to address a meeting at Woonsocket, Rhode Island. The notice accorded this meeting of Thursday, March 8th, by the Providence papers, had interested many people who had failed to hear Lincoln a week earlier, and a crowd of some four or five hundred with a band of music met the orator at the Providence station and accompanied him to Woonsocket. Large numbers joined the excursionists along the line of the road so that Harris Hall, the largest assembly room in Woonsocket, and one of the largest in the State, was greatly taxed to accommodate the assembled crowd. Lincoln made a powerful address and was followed by other speakers. There was plenty of music by the band, stirring campaign songs by the "Du Dah Club" which had accompanied the excursion, and on the whole there was no end to the enthusiasm until midnight when the orator and his escort were again landed, on their return, at the station at Providence.

In anticipation of Lincoln's speech at Norwich, Connecticut, on Friday, March 9th, the evening following the meeting at Woonsocket, the Republicans of that place had been making active preparations. It was the home city of Governor William A. Buckingham, and the rival political clubs were stirring up a lively interest in the issues of the campaign. On one side were ranged "the Bucks" whose name had been appropriated in abbreviated form from the name of the Republican gubernatorial candidate; opposed to them, were "the Chepultepecs" who took their name from the

circumstance that the Democratic candidate had fought in the Mexican War at the battle of Chapultepec. Mr. Lincoln's coming was a gala occasion for "the Bucks", and the following advertisement from the Norwich Weekly Courier of Thursday, March 8th, shows that it was proposed to make the most of the event:

GREAT REPUBLICAN RALLY
HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN OF ILLINOIS
will address
THE CITIZENS OF NORWICH
next Friday Evening, at 7 o'clock

"The Republican Committee hope to be able to procure Breed Hall for the occasion; but, as it is otherwise engaged at present and they may possibly fail to secure it, arrangements will be made whereby the greatest possible number will be privileged to hear the great Western orator, of which arrangements, if necessary, timely notice will be given.

"All parties are invited. The Republicans are not afraid or ashamed to avow their principles or to hold them up to the consideration of their political opponents.

"If Breed Hall is secured (and we believe it will be) the galleries will be exclusively devoted to the accommodation of ladies."

The town hall was filled to its utmost capacity by the audience that assembled on the appointed evening, to listen to Mr. Lincoln. He was escorted to the hall by the "Buck Club", and the chair was occupied by Hon. Joseph G. Lamb, first Vice-President of that organization, in the absence of its President, H. H. Starkweather, Esq., who was confined to his home by sickness. A delegation was expected from Danielson, and the opening

of the meeting was delayed in the hope of its arrival. Mr. Lincoln had already commenced his speech when this delegation of over one hundred entered the hall and he was obliged to pause while it was greeted with three cheers from the audience.

A later reference to this Norwich speech makes it unnecessary at this point to concern ourselves with the drift of Mr. Lincoln's remarks. An utterance of one of the speakers who followed him is of sufficient interest to deserve a passing mention. It was expressed with the most complimentary intentions towards Mr. Lincoln but, at the National Convention at Chicago, it was the very thing to save Lincoln from which, his friends had their greatest struggle. Hon. Daniel P. Tyler of Brooklyn, was the speaker and in these words referred to a possibility that Lincoln might be honored with the nomination for Vice-President:

"I care much as to who is to be the nominee for President but more for him who is to be nominated for Vice-President. Would it not, my friends, be 'nuts' to us all to find out some day before long, that Stephen A. Douglas, when he goes into the senate chamber of the United States, should see the Vice-President's chair filled by one he so much fears and we and all good Republicans so deservedly esteem? That would be the long and short of the matter of the late Illinois election."

The speaker, and the audience that so loudly applauded, believed that the sentiment did Lincoln the very extreme of honor, that its allusions swept the entire horizon of Lincoln's ambition and possible aspirations. To keep him from being relegated to this very office, to save him from Seward's adherents who were anxious to give him a secondary place on a ticket headed by their own candidate—

this was one of the great difficulties that his friends had to surmount in the national convention of three months later.

Up to this point, the course of Mr. Lincoln's progress through New England has been followed from point to point, and allusion has been made to some of the incidents along the way. There has been little or no reference to the manner in which Mr. Lincoln was addressing himself to his New England audiences, although some curiosity must have been aroused on the subject, and it is of quite as much interest as any other feature of the trip. The large audiences with which he was everywhere greeted, the close and careful attention accorded his remarks, their subsequent effect in stirring his hearers to a self-investigation as to the basic principles of their belief—all bear indubitable evidence that Mr. Lincoln had something to say of more than ordinary weight and that he presented it in a straightforward and logical manner that carried conviction home to his hearers. Probably no public speaker, at first glance and before his face had caught the light of animated discourse, was ever more unattractive to look upon. The oddities of Mr. Lincoln's appearance have been so fully dwelt upon, by every author who has essayed to write about him, that they are familiar to every one. His face was unusually and noticeably barren of promise; his figure was grotesque; his voice was peculiar, though not unpleasant. Commanding presence and grace of carriage could have little part in his speaking. His success, therefore, was purely a triumph of the touch of

his mind on that of his hearer; and being so, it is of special interest to examine somewhat into the matter of his spoken word. In doing so, we should not be surprised to find that, while his talks often went into new fields and touched upon matters of special local interest, still never in their main lines did they depart far from his great Cooper Union speech; and quite naturally not, for in that speech, he had held the strategical positions that his experience of years had taught him were the right and tenable ones for him to hold and he had used the sure phraseology in stating and defending them that had best defended them against Douglas and his other political adversaries on the stump. If there are occasional places in these New England speeches, where they seem to repeat one another and the Cooper Union speech almost word for word, it is for such reason, and not because Mr. Lincoln used any extensive written notes; on the contrary, his usual habit was to speak without notes or from the briefest jottings, and it is known that on the very day on which his Cooper Union speech was delivered, he could furnish the reporters no advance sheets and did not even know that such a procedure was customary in the East.

As a good example of one of these New England speeches, take the one delivered at New Haven on March 6th and repeated at Norwich a few evenings later. In its entirety, an hour and a half was required for its delivery. Without attempting to quote it at any great length, we can indicate its general arrangement and briefly quote to

advantage several of its most noticeable and characteristic parts.

After referring to the near approach of another presidential election, Mr. Lincoln announced the main and only topic with which he was concerned in the following words:

"Whether we will or not, the question of slavery is *the* question, the all absorbing topic of the day. It is true that all of us—and by that I mean, not the Republican Party alone but the whole American people, here and elsewhere, wish this question out of the way. It prevents the adjustment and the giving of necessary attention to other questions of national importance. The people of the whole nation agree that this question ought to be settled and yet it is not settled. And the reason is that they are not agreed how. All wish it done, but some wish one way and some another and none of them are able to accomplish the common object."

Starting with this introduction, the speaker reviewed the history of the slavery agitation and the various compromises and covenants that had been made, showing how in each case it had been fondly hoped that the question had been settled, but how time and again the agitation had broken out afresh. He showed how the best and greatest of our statesmen had underestimated its importance by "applying small cures for great sores" and drew a contrast between the different lights in which it was regarded in the North and in the South. Then, with great clearness and fairness, he stated the only possible policies that could be followed in dealing with the question, illustrating the situation in his most characteristic manner. As the whole kernel of the slavery situation, as viewed by Lincoln, is summed up in this portion of his address

and as it so characteristically displays his method of exposition, the speech at this point is again given verbatim:

"There are but two policies in regard to slavery that can be at all maintained. The first, based on the property view that slavery is right, conforms to that idea throughout and demands that we shall do everything for it that we ought to do, if it were right. We must sweep away all opposition, for opposition to the right is wrong; we must agree that slavery is right and we must adopt the idea, that property has made the owner believe, that slavery is morally right and socially elevating. This gives a philosophical basis for a permanent policy of encouragement. The other policy is the one that squares with the idea that slavery is wrong, and it consists in doing everything that we ought to do, if it is wrong. Now I don't wish to be misunderstood nor to leave a gap down, to be misrepresented even. I don't mean that we ought to attack it where it exists. To me it seems that, if we were to form a government anew, in view of the actual presence of slavery, we should find it necessary to frame just such a government as our fathers did; giving to the slaveholder the entire control where the system was established, while we possessed the power to restrain it from going outside those limits. From the necessities of the case, we should be compelled to form just such a government as our blessed fathers gave us; and, surely if they have so made it, that adds another reason why we should let slavery alone where it exists. If I saw a venomous snake crawling in the road, any man would say I might seize the nearest stick and kill it; but if I found that snake in bed with my children, that would be another question. I might hurt the children more than the snake and more than it might hurt them. Much more, if I found it in bed with my neighbor's children and I had bound myself by a solemn compact not to meddle with his children under any circumstances, it would become me to let that particular mode of getting rid of the gentleman alone. But if there was a bed newly made up, to

which the children were to be taken, and it was proposed to take a batch of young snakes and put them there with them, I take it no man would say there was any question how I ought to decide. That is just the case! The new territories are the newly made bed to which our children are to go, and it lies with the nation to say whether they shall have snakes mixed up with them or not. It does not seem as if there could be much hesitation what our policy should be.

"Now I have spoken of a policy based on the idea that slavery is wrong and a policy based upon the idea that it is right. But an effort has been made for a policy that shall treat it as neither right or wrong." (Its leading exponent is Senator Douglas.) "I believe there is no danger of its becoming a permanent policy of the country for it is based on public indifference. There is nobody that don't care. All the people do care, one way or the other. This policy can be brought to prevail if the people can be brought to say honestly 'we don't care'; if not, it can never be maintained. It is for you to say whether that can be done."

Having thus clearly outlined the several policies, Mr. Lincoln went on to show that in adopting the policy of restraint, his party but desired to place the question where the fathers had placed it in making the constitution. Passing next to the charges made by his political opponents, he took them up one by one and answered them in detail as they had been answered in his Cooper Union speech—the matter of John Brown and Harper's Ferry, the accusation of sectionalism, the charge of lack of conservatism. He questioned whether anything short of ceasing to call slavery wrong and the ultimate overthrow of the free-state constitutions would satisfy the South, and concluded with this splendid exhortation:

"Let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively.

Let us be diverted by none of those *sophistical* contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored—contrivances, such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should neither be a live man or a dead man—such as a policy of ‘don’t care’ on a question about which all true men do care—such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to disunionists reversing the divine rule, and calling not the sinners, but the righteous, to repentance—such as invocations of Washington imploring men to unsay what Washington did.

“Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened by menaces of destruction to the government nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty, as God gives us power, and as we understand it.”

On Saturday, March 10th, Lincoln went from Norwich to Bridgeport. His speech there in the evening was delivered in the largest hall in the city. It was filled to overflowing and many failed to gain admission. The day following, Lincoln passed outside the boundaries of New England, never again to recross them. His reception had everywhere been a surprise to him, and the marked impression created had excelled anything that he had expected to accomplish in the East.

No public man has ever visited New England for the purpose of addressing her people whose visit was more opportune in its relation to subsequent events or more fortunate in its immediate and more deferred results. So important a bearing in result did this trip have upon Lincoln’s career that one is surprised at the meagre and unreliable mention it has had from his biographers:

so closely did it knit itself into the fabric of our local history that it is a public misfortune for New England that no competent pen has made it a part of her records. And now, lest it be thought that an undue importance is being given to this short sojourn in New England, let us briefly consider it in these three aspects:

1. Its fortunate effect on the State election in Connecticut.
2. Its influence upon the New England delegates to the nominating convention of three months later.
3. Its salutary consequence in allaying doubt and inspiring confidence in Lincoln's candidacy and administration.

The spring elections in New England followed within a month after Lincoln's departure. They were favorable to the cause he had advocated in all the states, except in Rhode Island. The struggle was closest and most hotly contested in Connecticut, and here Lincoln had contributed largely to the final successful result: indeed, it is not too much to claim that, except for his speeches in this state, the result would have been reversed. Buckingham was re-elected Governor by the small plurality of 451 votes. If 226 only of those votes had been cast against him and for his opponent, then Connecticut's second great war governor would have failed of an election. To claim that Lincoln converted less than 300 votes from Seymour to Buckingham, would be to greatly underestimate the quality of his work and the strength of his appeals. And what if Buckingham had met defeat? Connecticut's governor would have been

Thomas H. Seymour, an earlier governor of the state, a veteran soldier and one esteemed by his neighbors and friends but withal a man known as a "peace Democrat", whose sympathies had always been largely with the South and who continued his opposition to the war from its beginning to its close. Instead of Connecticut proving a strong right arm for Lincoln to lean upon, she would have been a hindrance and obstruction to the national administration, her example would have been lost upon the nation, and her true position in the great struggle misrepresented for all time.

By a turn of fortune unexpected and entirely unlooked for in the East, and only three months after his departure from New England, Mr. Lincoln was nominated on the third ballot for President of the United States by the Republican National Convention at Chicago. A simple analysis of the manner in which some of the votes were cast in the convention will suffice to develop the second point that we wish to emphasize. It was the general expectation that New England's full voting strength was sure for Seward; but on the first ballot, Lincoln received nineteen of her eighty-two votes, and on the third and final ballot he received forty-two. Maine's vote did not change from first to last—six for Lincoln and ten for Seward. New Hampshire did not give Lincoln less than seven of her ten votes on any ballot. On the first ballot, Vermont complimented one of her own sons with her ten votes but, on the next two ballots, all went to Lincoln. Massachusetts had

twenty-six votes, of which she gave Lincoln four on the first and second ballot, and eight on the third. Rhode Island's vote was scattering on the first ballot without any for Lincoln; she gave him five of her eight on the third. Connecticut cast a scattering vote throughout the entire balloting; of her twelve votes, Lincoln received two on the first ballot and four on the second and third. Does this not show a remarkable defection of eastern votes to a western candidate—a tendency the more remarkable because the chances of that candidate had hardly been seriously regarded in the East before the convention. It was another result of Lincoln's visit to New England.

But beyond all else, the great thing and the tremendously important thing accomplished by Lincoln's visit was that it left behind a good impression. Comparatively few only, out of the great body of New England people, had the chance to hear him, but those so favored had been impressed with the fact that he was an earnest and talented man. And for all concerned, the impression was a fortunate one to be abroad in New England at that time.

Lincoln's nomination was not only a great surprise, but even a shock to the East. "I remember," says a Republican of 1860, "that when I first read the news on a bulletin board, as I came down street in Philadelphia, I experienced a moment of intense physical pain; it was as though some one had dealt me a heavy blow over the head, then my strength failed me. I believed our cause was doomed."

It was simply a thing that happened against all eastern predictions and forecasts. Tarbell's "Life of Lincoln" tells how far afield these forecasts were:

"In the first four months of 1860, his name was almost unmentioned as a presidential candidate in the public prints of the East. In a list of twenty-one prominent candidates, prepared by D. W. Bartlett and published in New York towards the end of 1859, Lincoln's name is not mentioned; nor does it appear in a list of twenty-four of 'our living representative men' prepared for presidential purposes by John Savage and published in Philadelphia in 1860.

"Up to the opening of the convention in May there was, in fact, no specially prominent mention of Lincoln by the eastern press.

"Greeley, in the New York Tribune, printed correspondence favoring the nomination of prominent Republicans; but not of Lincoln. The New York Herald recognized six aspirants, but Lincoln was not among them. May 10th, 'The Independent' in an editorial on 'The Nomination at Chicago' said 'Give us a man known to be true upon the only question that enters into the canvass—a Seward, a Chase, a Wade, a Sumner, a Fessenden, a Banks.' But it did not mention Lincoln. His most conspicuous Eastern recognition before the convention was in 'Harpers Weekly' of May 12th, his face being included in a double page of portraits of 'eleven prominent candidates for the Republican presidential nomination at Chicago'. Brief biographical sketches appeared in the same number—the last and shortest of them being of Lincoln."

In such degree as these forecasts were remote from the actual event, so much greater was the shock to the great body of the eastern people when the unexpected thing happened and the news of Lincoln's nomination was flashed across the country. A feeling of dismay seized many serious minded people, and on many lips the question was

“Who is this man Lincoln who has been chosen over the heads of more experienced and well-known men; was he, indeed, but an obscure country lawyer, an adventurer without pedigree, a coarse backwoodsman who did not know the art of wearing clothes and who knew even less about directing the affairs of a nation?” It was an emergency when confidence could be restored with no uncertain answer to such questionings. And here is the opportuneness and tremendous importance of Lincoln’s New England trip. It had left in the East, only three months before, its own answer and the best possible answer to all these questions. Those who had listened to Lincoln—few though they were as compared to those who had not—in no uncertain terms praised his ability and earnestness and gave themselves to his support with a zeal and diligence that at once restored faith and soon created enthusiasm. So too his party press, especially in those cities lying along the route of his trip, had not to seek its information from the West but with a prompt response to all questionings and shafts of ridicule, sprang to Lincoln’s support with the same spirit, if not with the same words, as the “New London Daily Chronicle” of May 21st, 1860:

“We shall give him our vote as a matter of course. He came to Connecticut and New Hampshire a short time ago to assist them in carrying their state elections, and they will be likely to do something in the way of enthusiasm and voting for him in return. He will make what we have not had lately—an honest President. He is neither a trickster nor a time server but a straightforward, manly, able man who believes in the principles

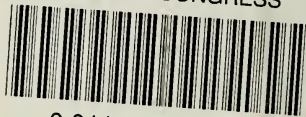
he represents. He is in fact the Republican platform in boots. God bless him and give him victory."

History records the answer to the prayer; how between May and November, respect and affection grew for Lincoln; how the entire electoral vote of New England contributed to his election; how Connecticut furnished a Gideon Welles for his cabinet and a Governor Buckingham for his support; how during the dark days of the Civil War, New England's loyalty did not falter and she gave of her best unstintingly for the cause; how, as an earnest of the continuance of that bond of sympathetic relation established by his visit to her soil, New England again gave Lincoln her entire electoral vote in 1864; how, when a few months later Lincoln gave up his life at Washington, the full meed of victory had been won and he passed into history the greatest American of the nineteenth century.





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